

mediaeval writers to the technique of economic theory were less significant than their premises. Their fundamental assumptions, both of which were to leave a deep imprint on the social thought of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, were two : that economic interests are the real business of life, which is salvation, and that economic conduct is one aspect of personal conduct, upon which, as on other parts of it, the rules of 'morality' are binding. Material riches are necessary ; they have a secondary importance, since without them men cannot support themselves and help one another; "the wise ruler, as St. Thomas said,⁸⁸ will consider in founding his State the natural resources of the country. But economic motives are suspect. Because they are powerful appetites, men fear them, but they are not mean enough to applaud them. Like other strong passions, what they need, it is thought, is not a clear field, but repression. There is no place in mediaeval theory for economic activity which is not related to a moral end, and to found a science of society upon the assumption that the appetite for economic gain is a constant and measurable force, to be accepted, like other natural forces, as an inevitable and self-evident *datum*, would have appeared to the mediaeval thinker as hardly less irrational or less immoral, than

to make the premise of social philosophy
the unrestrained operation of such necessary human
attributes as pugnacity or the sexual instinct. The
outerJs ordained for the sake of the inner ; economic goods
are instrumental—sicut qucedam adminicula, quibus
adjuvamus ad tendendum in beatitudinem. "It is lawful to
desire temporal blessings, not putting them in the
first place, as though setting up our rest in them, but
regarding them as aids to blessedness, .inasmuch as
they support our corporal life and serve as instruments
for acts of virtue/" Riches, as St. Antonino says,
exist for man, not man for riches*
At every turn, therefore, there are limits,
restrictions,